

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 R

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S/S - MR. ORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 195216

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, LY

SUBJECT: APPROACH TO LIBYANS ON NORTHROP-PAGE DENIAL

REF: STATE 190023

1. NORTHROP-PAGE HAS REQUESTED THAT IN ORDER TO ASSURE THAT THE LARG FULLY UNDERSTANDS REASONING BEHIND DEPARTMENT'S DECISION TO WITHHOLD APPROVAL OF AIR DEFENSE CONTRACT RECENTLY CONCLUDED BETWEEN PAGE AND LARG WE EXPLAIN THE MATTER THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS. WE BELIEVE THIS NOT ONLY WOULD HELP DEFLECT UNDUE LIBYAN RECRIMINATIONS AGAINST NORTHROP-PAGE BUT MIGHT ALSO AVOID LARG MISUNDERSTANDING CONCERNING OUR MOTIVES.

2. ACCORDINGLY YOU SHOULD AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY MAKE AN ORAL APPROACH AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND CONVEY OUR POSITION IN THE FOLLOWING TERMS:

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...-A. A YEAR AGO THE USG ACQUIESCED IN THE PROPOSAL OF NORTHROP-PAGE TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT FOR THE SUPPLY OF CERTAIN COMPONENTS OF AN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM. AT THE TIME, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE A NUMBER

OF PROBLEMS IN US-LIBYAN RELATIONS, WE DID NOT EXPECT FURTHER DETERIORATION AND WERE HOPEFUL THAT SOME IMPROVEMENT MIGHT TAKE PLACE.

....B. UNFORTUNATELY, IN THE INTERVENING YEAR LIBYA HAS TAKEN AN ACTIVE ROLE IN OPPOSING US EFFORTS TO FACILITATE A MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT AND IN OPPOSING OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST THAT ARE COOPERATING WITH US.

....C. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES WE BELIEVE IT IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH OUR POLICY INTERESTS TO APPROVE THE SALE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO THE LARG AND WE HAVE INFORMED NORTHROP-PAGE THAT APPROVAL OF ITS AIR DEFENSE CONTRACT WITH THE LARG HAS BEEN WITHDRAWN.

....D. THE US FULLY RECIPROCATES LIBYA'S DESIRE FOR BETTER OFFICIAL RELATIONS, AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON EXPLAINED TO YOUR CHARGE D'AFFAIRS IN WASHINGTON DURING THEIR RECENT CONVERSATION, AND WE WELCOME CONTINUED ACTIVE RELATIONS IN THE CULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL FIELDS. HOWEVER, AS LONG AS THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO ACTIVELY OPPOSE AND UNDERMINE OUR MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORTS, WHICH ARE A MAJOR US NATIONAL INTEREST, WE WILL BE UNABLE TO APPROVE THE SALE OF ITEMS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO LIBYA BY AMERICAN FIRMS.

3. NORTHROP-PAGE HAS BEEN INFORMED OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVE IN TRIPOLI WILL BE IN CONTACT WITH THE EMBASSY TO COORDINATE THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LIBYANS. SISCO

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AIR DEFENSE, AIRCRAFT SALES, CONTRACTS, MILITARY AIRCRAFT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: johnsorg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE195216
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA/AFN:DLJAMESON/MP
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750284-0279
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197508101/baaaasgp.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: johnsorg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 AUG 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <04 DEC 2003 by johnsorg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971010
Subject: n/a
TAGS: MILI, PFOR, LY, MILI, NORTHROP-PAGE, PFOR
To: TRIPOLI
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006